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German Social Democracy. Six lectures by BERTRAND RUSSELL. With an Appendix on Social Democracy and the Woman Question in Germany by ALYS RUSSELL. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1896. Pp. xiv + 204.

THIS little book is issued in the series of the London School of Economics and Politics and is typical of the original work being done by the faculty of that new and unique English institution. The book deserves a word of approbation in the first place for its form. A good table of contents and an excellent index fit it for use as a text-book. In the second place one is immediately impressed with the vantage ground of the author. Mr. Russell, a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and recently lecturer on geometry at Bryn Mawr, approaches his subject from the philosopher's point of view. His estimate of social-democratic materialism is the best possible introduction to a study of the followers of Marx.

It is Marx's materialism which gives to the movement which he founded its peculiar form and programme. Since mind has been produced by matter, its ultimate motives for action are to be found in material things; the production of these is, accordingly, the moving force which underlies all human phenomena. This transition is nowhere clearly set forth, and is obviously incapable of logical proof, but the outcome of it is this, that all human institutions and beliefs are ultimately, in the last analysis, the outcome of economic conditions, that is, of production and exchange of material things. . . . Religion, science, the state—in short, all branches of human activity—are, in the last resort, determined by economic causes (p. 7). [Ricardo was Marx's master.] The England of 1840–1870 has therefore become to the social democrats what the land of Canaan was to the Covenanters—the land from which all illustrations are drawn. . . . The shrewd Lancashire manufacturer to him, as to the Manchester school, is the type of all mankind; for social democrats who quote their facts more often from Marx than from life, this overweening influence of English conditions has, I think, been a source of much confusion and false judgment (pp. 8, 9).

Marx's two great doctrines relate to "surplus value" and "the concentration of capital." The pages on the theory of value are summed up by Mr. Russell as follows:

Ricardo proved that, in a state of free competition, the value of commodities, whose quantity can be indefinitely increased without increasing the cost of production, is measured by the cost of production; for this is the highest value at which the seller is sure of not being undersold. But Marx

says: Not cost of production, but labor-time measures value. By some impalpable metaphysical compulsion the capitalist must sell the product of twelve hours' normal labor for a value represented by twelve, though the cost of production is only represented by six. Why, under the circumstances, the capitalist is not forced by competition to reduce his price Marx does not attempt to explain. Ricardo has sometimes spoken of value as measured by labor-time, because he assumed that, apart from interest, cost of production consisted of wages, and wages were paid by the time. But Marx regards wages as purchase of labor-power, not of labor-time, and thus no reason remains why value should be measured by labor-time. . . . It must also be observed that where cost of production depends on quantity produced—as it must do whenever Marx's other law, of the concentration of capital, holds good—there cost of production is formally inadequate to determine value. For with different values there will be different amounts demanded, consequently different amounts produced and different costs of production. . . . The total neglect of demand as an economic force is a necessary consequence of the materialistic view of history. For, on this view, material things govern man and all his institutions, and this government is exerted through the agency of blind "productive forces." Production, therefore, is the fundamental fact, and demand is a mere consequence of it. . . . The necessity for taking demand into account, destroys not only Marx's theory of value, but the whole materialistic theory of history. . . . At this point it is customary for the self-satisfied German bourgeois to sing a pæan of triumph, and leave socialism to be devoured by its inconsistencies (pp. 19–24). [This is purely pedantic.] It is self-evident, since some men live in idle luxury, that a laborer normally produces more than he consumes, and that this surplus goes to support idleness. . . . It comes about, in economic language, by monopoly rent; whenever the man or company of large capital is able to produce more easily than the man of small capital, he is able, since large capitals cannot be indefinitely increased at will, to obtain a rent from his advantage, just as the landlord obtains a rent from the superiority of his land to the worst land in cultivation (p. 25).

Marx's second law of the concentration of capital is fundamental to his interpretation of socialism.

If, as Marx seems to suppose, every single business were in the hands of a single capitalist, then though all the rest of Marx's economic theory should be proved to be false, the sudden revolutionary change from private capital to collective management would seem inevitable. . . . But three points must be noticed in this process, which make it very different from the process suggested by Marx: (1) Big firms consist normally of companies, and their victory does not therefore necessarily diminish the number of individual capitalists; (2) a new middle class is created by large firms and the use of

machinery, *e. g.*, foremen, engineers, and skilled mechanics, and this class destroys the increasingly sharp opposition of capitalist and proletariat on which Marx lays so much stress; (3) the profitable management of businesses by the state presupposes a certain degree of development, and should therefore be undertaken at different times in different businesses, not, as Marx supposes, by a single revolutionary transformation. . . . But, in agriculture, where the law of diminishing returns prevails, the whole development is totally different from that of industry. . . . The economic size of a farm is not in its acreage, but in the capital laid out on it. In this sense many great farms of western America may be smaller than a suburban market garden. . . . Again, agricultural skill consists chiefly of special local knowledge of peculiarities of the soil, etc., and in this a small farmer is likely to have an advantage; . . . but it is evident that none of the above arguments have any force against the proposal for state ownership of land. For this proposal, as everyone knows, the arguments are, if anything, stronger than for any other collectivist measure, yet the peculiar form of Marxian socialism makes all these arguments logically inaccessible to German social democracy (pp. 35-38).

The second chapter is devoted to Lassalle, the third to the progress of socialism to the passing of the Exceptional Law of 1878. One could have asked for a chapter on Rodbertus, but the author satisfactorily explains this omission by the decline of the influence of Rodbertus on the modern social-democratic movement. The discussion of the exceptional law in the fourth chapter leads to the causes of opposition to social democracy, of which there are four chief reasons.

1. *Atheism*.—"Just as much as early Christianity, social democracy is logically forced to break with all existing faiths, and if it did otherwise it would lose much of that imposing emotional effect which it derives from its systematic completeness. At the same time, for the purposes of immediate practical politics, this opposition to Christianity must be regarded as a tactical mistake" (p. 93).

2. *Views on marriage and the family*.—The social democrats, by their teachings on these subjects, have come into disfavor largely on account of being misunderstood. "They wish, by securing the economic independence of women, as of laborers, to change marriage from a money purchase of legal property into a free choice on both sides, dictated not by economic motives, but by feeling" (p. 96). Mrs. Russell, in the appendix, has given an admirable

criticism of Bebel's book, *Die Frau*, and has shown many of the points both of strength and weakness in the present state of the "woman question" in Germany. She calls attention to the unfortunate influence of the social-democratic idea of *Klassenkampf*, which prevents middle-class and working women from uniting for their mutual benefit. This she illustrates by their failure to combine in a protest against the treatment of women's rights in the new civil code. This code has been adopted since this book appeared, and furnishes one of the best evidences of the impotence of social democracy so long as it views life from the purely economic standpoint. The recent Women's Congress in Berlin would have furnished further illustrations had the book appeared a little later.

3. *Internationalism*; and, 4. *Advocacy of revolution*, are shown to prejudice conservative Germans against social democracy.

Lectures V and VI, on Organization and Tactics, are full of fresh material derived from Mrs. Russell's personal observation of party methods. The great tactical failure has been in attempting to apply their inflexible philosophy to agriculture. The struggle of Vollmar, latterly aided in some measure by Liebknecht and Bebel, to secure a modification of their attitude toward the rural communities, despite its inconsistency with Marxian doctrines, and the opposition of the rank and file to any such heterodoxy, is fully and carefully treated.

A very useful bit of work in the concluding chapter is the account of the existing political parties and their relation to social democracy. It is a pity that the recent advent of the national socialists, pastors Naumann and Göhre, with their followers from the ranks of the Christian socialists, could not have been included. This party, insignificant in itself, gives promise of a certain amount of disintegrating influence among the older parties which may help to weaken socialist orthodoxy, which Mrs. Russell has shown to be such an incubus on the social-democratic party. The conclusion of the book is: "There are, in my opinion, only two items which the party could not abandon without political suicide, namely, *political democracy* and *economic collectivism*, the latter to be brought about by the natural growth of firms, until monopoly becomes the cheapest, and state monopoly the socially most beneficial form of every business" (p. 165). This book is at the same time the fairest and most judicially critical treatment of German social democracy which has appeared.

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